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BOOK REVIEWS

THE SELF AND NATURE. DEWITT H. PARKER. Harvard University Press. 1917. Pp. x, 316. \$2.00.

Professor Parker invites his readers to embark with him on an "intellectual adventure"; and as one who has ventured I gladly bear witness that it is well worth while to accompany him. There is something singularly attractive about the intellectual honesty with which he attacks his problems. Bold yet self-critical, sure of his vision yet not dogmatic, he writes at all times with that inimitable freshness which comes only from first-hand reflection. His claims to originality, so far from being immodest, are amply justified. His theories are never mere patterns ingeniously constructed out of chips from the workshops of others. Much as he has learned from the great thinkers to whom he acknowledges his obligations — from James and Royce and Santayana, from Russell and Bradley, from Peirce and Bergson — yet he has preserved his independence of thought, and the views which he puts forward are always his own, and often both novel and important.

Metaphysics is for him the attempt to construct a total vision of the world from that fragment of it which each of us has in his own experience. "Radical empiricism extended through the imagination," is his method. A frankly "animistic conception of nature" is his conclusion. Nature for him is a single experience or mind, of the tissue of which "sensations" form a real part. To maintain within this context the distinct individuality of human minds, and thus to achieve a fresh solution of the old problem of pluralism and monism, is, I think, his chief concern. I could wish, though, that he had expounded his theory of nature on its merits in a chapter by itself. At present the reader has to piece it together from scattered passages. His attention is never focused on the theory as a whole. It is too much dispersed among particular problems.

The first of these particular problems concerns the nature of "self" and "mind" (Ch. I). Like Descartes, Parker invites us to begin with ourselves. Inspection of experience (which is for him synonymous with consciousness or mind) reveals that self is only a "part" of mind — that part which as "activities" can be distinguished from "content." Content is whatever the self "finds" or "is in contact with," in short, what is immediately experienced, what is present, as distinct from what is represented by ideas. The *unity* of the mind

consists precisely in this contact of self and content, just as the unity of the self consists in the felt "interweaving of activities."

On this basis Parker proceeds (Ch. II) to offer a theory of personal identity. As this is one of the theories for which he explicitly claims originality, it deserves to be stated and examined at some length. Its point is to defend the truth of the judgment in which each of us declares his present self to be identical with his past self. The *concept* of self-identity must be based on the *fact*, that is, on the *experience* of identity. Identity must be "given." It must be "found in experience." Moreover, it must not be analyzed away into *similarity* of present and past. Nothing but *numerical* identity will do. Now if experiences, as the usual view has it, are momentary events which never recur, it is impossible for anyone ever to have the same experience twice. He can have only another experience very similar to the first. But this yields *two* experiences, not "one and the same." On these terms therefore personal identity cannot be saved. Hence we must hold that the very same experiences can recur, that "the very stuff of the old is born again." So far all is plain sailing.

But now the difficulties begin. Identity, we are told, is a matter of "more or less." It is never without difference, hence always "partial." This invites us to single out the parts which are identical, and more, which are identical absolutely and numerically. What are they in the self? To this question Parker returns varying answers. Sometimes he refers to examples like "the experience of carrying out a plan," where there is *one* plan worked out step by step through a long sequence of experiences. But mainly, I think, he falls back on the "feeling" of identity: "There is a sense of familiarity which pervades all experience and is the abiding identity within it." He clearly means that the feeling of familiarity which I have now is one and the same at all times; the feeling of identity is an identical feeling. But there is yet a third streak, where the life of the mind is described as "self-making and self-mending"; where identity is said to be at a maximum in the concentrations of one's whole being on a serious effort, and at a minimum in light moments of self-forgetfulness. We shall readily agree that in this sense a man is now more, now less, himself, that is, at his best; but our standard here is the positive spiritual quality of the experiences involved. The discussion at this level is beyond the mere sense of familiarity, and equally beyond the problem of what is numerically identical in my present and my past. Parker's failure to differentiate these three levels at which the problem of personal identity may be discussed, seems to me to be the great weakness of this chapter. What he requires is the concept of the "concrete universal,"

which both secures numerical identity and within it leaves room for all the fluctuations of qualitative identity.

Chapter III, on "The Metaphysics of Perception," defends the thesis that "appearances" or "sensations" are "real" and constitute the very substance of natural objects. "Nature is full of warmth and cold, pressures and touches and colors unperceived by man . . . [it] sings for itself and for us too in the sound of the brook, and paints pictures for itself and for us in every landscape that we see" — a doctrine of which Parker claims that it "should recommend itself not only to the reason but to the emotions." But no mere scraps of quotation can reproduce the union of acute reasoning and poetical feeling with which this chapter is written. Chapter IV applies this theory to the "Relation between Mind and Body." The body, as a physical thing, is a tissue of sensations; but it is also the instrument through which the self expresses itself, and on which its perception of and intercourse with the rest of nature depend. Hence without the body the soul cannot exist. The death of the one is the death of the other.

Lack of space compels me to pass with a bare mention the chapters on Time, Causality, Space, Universals, and even the long and brilliant chapter on Relations, with its masterly discussion of the theories of Bradley, Royce, and Russell, and the author's own original conclusion. I turn to Chapter X, on "The Unity of Minds." Here Parker boldly applies the concept of the mind of nature to the support of the two theses that "all minds overlap with nature and through nature with one another," and that "minds die." "Even as the mind springs from nature, so it dissipates back into nature again." "The death of the mind is the result of a conflict between the body and powers of the environment which find the activities of the organism incompatible with their own." Yet if the theory accounts for death, it accounts also, so Parker claims, for the origin of life, the origin of mind, and the freedom of rational action. At the same time, there runs through all nature a streak of chance, of the non-rational, which only on repetition becomes law and habit. The influence of Charles Peirce's "tychism" is here evident.

The conclusion (Ch. XI) has manifestly been written with deep feeling. It has an effect of sombre and restrained eloquence. It gives Parker's answer to the age-old questions of human hope and destiny — immortality, progress, the birth of the superman, cosmic perfection. It argues that philosophy cannot prove immortality, nor establish a theodicy — an inclusive perfection in which evil is overcome. Yet it concludes that despite suffering and mortality this is

neither a cruel nor an aimless world. We are permitted a real, if mortal, happiness, and our deaths are necessary in order that other and perhaps superior beings may realize their destiny. Meanwhile, the fundamental values of life remain intact. True, we can no longer believe in the "protected" world of the Theism of our forefathers. Yet this is no cause for pessimism, but rather a challenge to courage and adventure. "He surely has small hold upon the good who, despite sorrow and disappointment, does not find life worth while, just in thinking and loving, in laughing and creating, be it only for a brief period, followed by a sleep where no evil memories mock."

I shall have failed completely in this review if every reader of it does not become a reader of Professor Parker's book.

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THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL. GEORGE A. BARTON, Ph.D., LL.D. The Macmillan Co. 1918. Pp. x, 289. \$2.00.

This book is the second to appear in the much-needed Religious Science and Literature Series, which is designed to meet the wants of colleges and universities. Its value is therefore not to be judged primarily by its possible contributions to original research in the subject treated, but is rather to be determined by its pedagogical adequacy. The accuracy of the scholarship in such a series ought to be assumed as a matter of course. But is the disposition of the material of the kind to convey to the student a knowledge of the intricate questions involved without confusing him, and at the same time is the general treatment of the subject calculated to awaken curiosity and stimulate interest? These are the prime requisites, I take it, for the success of the proposed volumes.

Dr. Barton, to whom the immensely important but correspondingly difficult subject of the Religion of Israel has been intrusted, is one of the most accomplished and productive of our American Orientalists and Semitic scholars. The debt of recognition for an unfailing stream of stimulating contributions to biblical science and oriental research is one of those debts of honor which his colleagues are most happy to discharge. In the present volume Dr. Barton will sustain his reputation for the thoroughness of his scholarship and the mastery of his field. From the remotest pre-Israelitic antiquity to the Logos speculations of Philo and the New Testament he has traced with care the various stages of development of Hebrew thought, which he rightly